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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFO

1. The Society for German-Soviet Friendship (Gesellschaft fuer Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft) was established on 30 June 1947, at which time it was called the Society for the Study of the Culture of the U.S.S.R. (Gesellschaft zum Studium der U.S.S.R.). Its initial membership numbered about 2,000 and consisted of intellectuals, pedagogues, university professors, political functionaries, and representatives of numerous non-Communist institutions, both political and cultural, as well as of the government and the economy. Its purpose being the spreading of pro-Soviet propaganda and the expansion of Soviet influence, the Society featured film shows, theater performances, and theater visits; lectures, debates, and, also to some extent, exhibits, usually in close cooperation with the political and cultural officers of the Soviet occupation power. The latter maintained official and social contact with the Society which, in a number of cases, was openly publicized and the Soviet occupation authorities also occasionally furnished food, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco for parties given by the Society.

In 1948, the Russians reconstructed a building at the Kastanienwaeldchen near Unter den Linden with a theater adjoining, which was called the House of Soviet Culture (Haus der Sowjetkultur) and was opened to German visitors. At that time, the activity of the Society was expanded. An extensive program of entertainment and performances was initiated, while at the same time the occupation authority ostensibly curtailed its own participation. Accordingly, the membership rose to approximately 20,000 in the spring of 1948 and, one year later, was approximately 70,000. Thus, the Society was rapidly becoming a true mass organization capable of spreading effective propaganda for the U.S.S.R., praising it as the seat of world socialism and the champion of all progressive forces throughout the world.

3. The corps of functionaries required for this type of organization originated in the Society and was developed along with other bodies of functionaries in the various political, economic, and administrative institutions making up the machinery of the Soviet Zone state. It was hoped that through close relations among these functionaries, a complete ideological control of the state and all organizations engaged in shaping public life could be achieved, thus establishing the concept of friendship with the Soviet Union on a firm basis. The international situation, however, and the differences between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies which led to the formation of two German Governments adversely affected the attainment of this goal. It appeared that, in the SPD as well as in other organizations in the Soviet Zone of Germany which advocated Socialism,

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there were many who believed that propaganda urging friendship and cooperation with the U.S.S.R. would make it more difficult to persuade the German people to accept the Marxist ideology, especially in view of the experiences which many Germans suffered at the hands of the Soviet invaders in 1945. Therefore, it became necessary to give the concept of friendship with the U.S.S.R. a strong impetus, which was to be accomplished through the Society.

4. In the spring of 1950, the membership of the Society approximated 1,000,000. At that time, it was definitely clear that, as a political party and the only responsible bearer of political power, the SED was unable to obtain sufficient popular backing to convert the Soviet Zone German Democratic Republic into a satellite of the U.S.S.R. As a result it appeared to be appropriate to transform the SED from a party of the masses into a party consisting primarily of a hard core of functionaries similar to the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. (Bolshevist) and to concentrate upon reaching the masses through the National Front and its branches, the National Front Committee and the National Council, particularly with regard to political and propaganda matters relating to all of Germany. Growing political importance was also attributed to the Moscow-controlled World Peace Movement with its German Peace Committee (Deutsches Friedenskomitee) in Berlin. The Society for Soviet-German Friendship was closely connected with both organizations, stressing in the Peace Committee the conception of friendship with all peoples, particularly with the U.S.S.R. as the strongest power for peace, and in the National Front, placing emphasis upon portraying the U.S.S.R. as the friend of Germany and the champion of her national independence. The Society thus developed from a mass organization into a political front organization, establishing the ideological line for all political forces, organizations, and movements; it now comprises more than two and one half million members about 10 percent of whom live in Western Germany.
5. The developmental stages of the Society described above are illustrated more clearly by the structural changes reflected in a breakdown of the membership figures into the various social classes. In 1948, more than 46 percent of the members were white collar workers and 21 percent were intellectuals, university, and high school students. At the same time, workers made up less than 12 percent and agricultural workers less than one percent. A year later, when the membership had risen to about 70,000, which represented about three and one half times its previous number, the percentage of the workers had almost doubled, having risen to more than 20 percent while the percentage of the other groups had scarcely changed (sic). In 1950, when the membership approximated a million, the workers represented the largest single group, making up more than 37 percent compared with 34 percent for the white collar workers, while the percentage of the intellectuals and students had fallen to 11 percent, and the percentage of the farmers and agricultural workers remained insignificant.
6. The changes in the character and mission of the Society also affected the activities of the lower-level units. While social work first rested with loosely organized circles and student groups, it later shifted to residential groups, and now, in a large measure, it lies with the enterprise groups in which the services of more than 60 percent of the members are being enlisted for social work. These enterprise group activities are characterized at present by German-Soviet exchanges of experiences under the "Learn-from-the-Soviet-Union Program" which is to reorganize management and labor in accordance with the Soviet pattern and is executed in cooperation with the FDGB, the ideological preparation and penetration of the enterprises being accomplished by the Society and the organizational planning by the FDGB.

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7. The highest-level organizational body of the Society is the Central Committee, which controls the Land Committees in Land Brandenburg, Thuringia, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg and Greater Berlin. The Land Committees in the Laender control the Kreis Committees. The Kreis Committees do not necessarily coincide in their jurisdiction with the administrative division of the Kreise. They include the local agencies with their subunits, the residential or local groups, and the enterprise groups, the latter being composed of members working in enterprises.
8. The body which decides the missions and objectives of the organization is the Congress which, according to the statutes, is required to convene at least every two years, or whenever it is requested by the majority of the Land Committees which are represented in the Congress by delegates. In addition to the normal responsibilities such as the rendering of a statement of accounts and a cash report, the congress elects the president, the vice president, the members of the Central Committee (not less than 75) and adopts a program of activities. The president represents the Society in all matters including those pertaining to law and jurisdiction and convenes the Congress when so directed by the Central Committee. The present president is Friedrich Ebert, Oberbuergermeister of East Berlin. He succeeded Professor Juergen Kuczynski, chief of the Deutsches Wirtschaftsinstitut (German Economic Institute). Ebert was elected not by the Congress but rather by the Central Committee at a session in the Berlin House of Soviet Culture on 19 June 1950, after Kuczynski, his predecessor, had declared his resignation at the same session and suggested that Ebert be appointed his successor. Immediately upon assuming the duties of his office, Ebert announced the resignation of Hans Mark who had been secretary general. Along with the secretary-general, Ebert has a firm grasp upon the Congress and the Central Committee, which enjoys very little opportunity for freedom of expression in a truly democratic way.
9. The individual actually controlling the Society is the secretary-general. This office is held at present by Gottfried Gruenberg, Mark's successor, who previously served as Minister of Culture of Land Mecklenburg. When he and Ebert appeared on the scene, the organization received a pronounced aggressive impulse. Their appointment indicated a revolution within the Society and coincided approximately with the purge or, in some cases, even legal prosecution of a number of intellectuals who had been prominent in the field of politics and culture. Prominent among the latter was Lex Ende, editor-in-chief of the Friedenspost, the weekly magazine of the German-Soviet Society, who was brought to trial. The secretary-general is assisted by a secretariat which, like him, is elected by and from the Central Committee over which the president presides.
10. Following is a list of the members of the Central Committee who, together with the president and vice-president, were elected or confirmed in office unanimously at the Third Congress in January 1951:

President: Friedrich Ebert, Oberbuergermeister of East Berlin

Vice-President: Willi Bredel, writer

Vice-President: Dr. Reinhold Lobedanz, president of the Chamber of the Laender

Vice-President: Erich Wirth, lathe operator

Central Committee:

Wolfgang Baur, mechanical funder

Willi-Peter Konzok, state secretary

Anita Deubel, woman worker

Johannes Dieckmann, president of the People's Chamber

Kaete Dodenhoeff, laborer

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Friedrich Fr. Ehlers, member of the marine fire brigade
Professor Heinrich Ehmsen, artist
Friedrich Ehrhardt, white collar employee
Ernst Erler, student
Hermann Fabrey, farmer
Karl Fritzsche, locksmith
Willi Freyhoff, laborer and "Hero of Labor"
Selma Gabelin, secretary of Land Saxony
Lina Gebhardt, housewife
Lucie Goeseke, rural housewife
Gerald Goetting, CDU secretary general
Herbert Greiff, director of the steel mill in Brandenburg *
Gottfried Gruenberg, secretary-general
Liesbeth Gruetzmacher, apprentice
Professor Hermann Haack, cartographer
Fritz Hamacher, deputy secretary-general
Walter Hanke, VdGB functionary
Marie-Luise Henning, secretary of Land Mecklenburg
Fritz Heilmann, secretary of Land Thuringia
Adolf Hennecke, Ministerialrat
Stefan Hermlin, writer
Rudolf Herrstadt, editor-in-chief of Neues Deutschland
Kurt Hildesheim, agricultural worker
Kurt Hobeissl, laborer
Herbert Hummeltzsch, organization secretary
Dr. Ernst Kammel, ministerial employee
Fridolin Karnohl, secretary
Heinrich Kimpfel, white collar employee
Rudolf Kirchner, FDGB functionary
Liesa Klatte
Joachim Konrad, laborer
Juergen Kuczynski, economist

Heinz Kurth, chief of the Jarivization Department (sic)
Otto Lauber, laborer and "Hero of Labor"
Margot Laubisch, mechanic apprentice
Fritz Leder, laborer
Fritz Leisner, manager
Arno von Lenski, MDPD committee member
Wolfgang Lindstaedt, laborer
Robert Maas, resettled farmer
Otto Meier, President of the Diet of Brandenburg
Ella Maniegl, woman agricultural worker
Walter Moebius, tinker
Margarete Mueller, tractor driver
Rosemarie Mueller, teacher
Vinzenz Mueller, MDPD secretary
Walter Piduch, mechanical engineer
Heinrich Rau, Minister of Planning
Hans Reichelt, DED Organization Department
Hans Rodenberg, film director
Serg Romisch, youth secretary
Eva Romminger, student
Johann Schroeder, laborer
Gabriele Sachse, laborer
Heinrich Schwarze, country pastor
Josef Stoffen, agricultural laborer
Professor Dr. Johannes Stroux, president of the Academy of Sciences
Czeslaus Szymczak, resettled farmer
Herbert Taeschner, LDP secretary-general
Heinz Thielemann, laborer
Nally Tietz, white collar employee
Heinrich Tietze, farmer and burgomaster
Angelina Tizorra, student
Alfred Tottowitz, foreman
Helmut Unger, cabinetmaker

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Paul Verner, member of the SED Central Committee Secretariat
 Theodor Valenzick, locksmith
 Paul Wandel, Minister for Public Education
 Paul Wengels, Land secretary in East Berlin
 Klaus Willerding, chief of the Enlightenment and Propaganda Department
 Franz Wenzel, editor-in-chief
 Jutta Wille, seamstress
 Georg Wollgast, trustee
 Joachim Wolter, manager of the House of Soviet Culture
 Gerda Windmueller, housewife
 Max Zimmermann, resettled farmer
 Johannes Donath, director of the German Bank of Issue (Deutsche Notenbank)
 G.M. Pushkin, Soviet ambassador to East Germany
 Gusev (fnu), VOKS agent.

11. In keeping with the designation, "Society for the Study of the Culture of the Soviet Union", most of the names appearing on the Central Committee level when the Society was so named were those of prominent persons from the fields of science, arts, literature, and public life. The number of persons in this category was still comparatively large when, at the II Congress in the summer of 1949, the society was reorganized. However, a comparatively small number of the previous members was reelected at the III Congress, even though that assembly departed from the established rules to elect 85 members rather than 75 to the Central Committee. Among those not reelected, for example, were Professor van Beeck, Gerhard Wisler, Bernhard Kellermann, the noted writer, Stefan Heymann, and others. The Central Committee was reorganized in accordance with the requirements of a mass organization, and with no particular consideration for the qualification of the individual members. The work of the Committee consists largely of the execution of the working program adopted by the Congress as well as in the control of all activities of the organization during the period when the Congress is in recess. However, most of these duties are performed by special functionaries of the Society and by the SED rather than by the Committee members. Nearly all decisions are made by the secretariat, which is a truly operational body giving directives and propaganda and political instructions to the Land Committee and exercising a rigid control over its subordinate agencies. A printing office and several publishing houses are available.
12. The Land Committees are organized in accordance with a pattern similar to that of the Central Committee. Their executive organ is the Conference of the Land Delegates. They exercise the same functions and employ the same methods as the Congress, executing in their areas the missions assigned to them by the Central Committee through the secretary-general. Comparatively speaking, they play a much more active and responsible role than the members of the Central Committee. They, too, have a Land secretariat which is headed by a Land secretary. The Land Committee has a staff of fulltime advisors and controls and supervises the execution of his own instruction as well as those of the Central Committee in the lower units.

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He has under his command Kreis instructors (Bezirk instructors in East Berlin) who work in the Kreis branches of the Society. The Kreis Committees in turn elect a secretariat, with the Kreis instructor usually serving as Kreis secretary. He is not subordinate to the Kreis Committee and thus is in a position to carry out the instructions of the Land secretary and influence the Kreis Committee as well as the most basic units. The Kreis Committee as well as the secretariat are presided over by the first chairman. The instructor gives guidance and advice in the drafting of the program of activities which is prepared for all basic units. Accordingly, the only responsibility left to the local, residential, and enterprise groups with respect to the program is the fixing of dates and such minor modifications of the directives as local conditions, circumstances of age, trade, and requirements of the enterprises demand.

13. Under the Kreisvorstand is the local group (Ortsgruppe) which also has its own committee consisting of functionaries in charge of residential and enterprise groups and responsible for collection of dues. These basic units are required to report on social work participated in and action taken on directions from higher headquarters. Their reports are consolidated into a monthly report by the Kreis instructor. This monthly report is of considerable importance in guiding higher echelons in planning and decisions, inasmuch as it contains detailed information concerning the political and propaganda activity and development of the basic units and provides an effective check on all organizational matters.
14. The functionaries constantly concentrate on developing a greater degree of class consciousness among all members, on promoting their pro-Soviet attitude and their allegiance to the Soviet political line and willingness to fight for the **socialist** ideals of the Soviet Union. The work in the enterprise groups is intended to foster an exchange of Soviet-German experiences thereby transplanting Soviet methods of management, planning, and economy into the Soviet Zone of Germany. It is almost universally recognized that the final goal is the sovietization of Germany. A hard core of capable functionaries and a disciplined execution of carefully planned activities in which all members down to the basic units participate, is required for the achievement of this goal.

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* Comment: VEB Stahl- und Walzwerke Brandenburg.

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